

spouse must consent to the loan by signing the loan agreement. A request for an exception to the spousal consent requirement will be evaluated under the rules explained in 5 CFR part 1650.

(c) *Combat zone contributions.* If a service member account contains combat zone contributions, the loan will be distributed *pro rata* from all sources; loan repayments will be credited on a similar *pro rata* basis. If a loan is declared a taxable distribution, the *pro rata* share of the loan attributable to combat zone contributions (if any) will not be reported as taxable income to the participant.

Roger W. Mehle,

Executive Director, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2001-NM-72-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B2; A300 B4; A300 B4-600, B4-600R, and F4-600R (Collectively Called A300-600); A310; A319; A320; A321; A330; and A340 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Airbus Model A300 B2; A300 B4; A300 B4-600, B4-600R, and F4-600R (collectively called A300-600); A310; A319; A320; A321; A330; and A340 series airplanes. This proposal would require replacement of Labinal actuators in certain powered cockpit seats by new improved actuators. This action is necessary to prevent uncommanded horizontal movement of the cockpit seats or loss of ability to lock the seats in place during flight, which could limit the ability of the crew to perform necessary tasks, leading to reduced controllability of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 31, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport

Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2001-NM-72-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227-1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: 9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain "Docket No. 2001-NM-72-AD" in the subject line and need not be submitted in triplicate. Comments sent via the Internet as attached electronic files must be formatted in Microsoft Word 97 for Windows or ASCII text.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from SOGERMA Z.I. de l'arsenal, BP. 109-17303 Rochefort Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056, telephone (425) 227-2125; fax (425) 227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this action may be changed in light of the comments received.

Submit comments using the following format:

- Organize comments issue-by-issue. For example, discuss a request to change the compliance time and a request to change the service bulletin reference as two separate issues.
- For each issue, state what specific change to the proposed AD is being requested.
- Include justification (e.g., reasons or data) for each request.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before

and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this action must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 2001-NM-72-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket Number 2001-NM-72-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on Airbus Model A300 B2; A300 B4; A300 B4-600, B4-600R, and F4-600R (collectively called A300-600); A310; A319; A320; A321; A330; and A340 series airplanes, equipped with certain powered cockpit seats manufactured by SOGERMA. The DGAC advises that there have been incidents of uncommanded horizontal movement of the seats during flight. Investigation indicated that these incidents were due to broken Labinal actuators for the electric brake on the seats. This condition, if not corrected, could result in uncommanded movement of the cockpit seats or loss of ability to lock the seats into place during flight, which could limit the ability of the crew to perform necessary tasks, leading to reduced controllability of the airplane.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

SOGERMA has issued Service Bulletin SB TAAI2-25-402, Revision 1, dated December 21, 2000, which describes procedures for replacement of the Labinal actuators in the cockpit seats with new improved actuators. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 2000-524(B), dated December 27, 2000, in order to

assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

FAA's Conclusions

These airplane models are manufactured in France and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of § 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 548 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 4 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed replacement, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts would be provided at no cost to the operator. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$131,520, or \$240 per airplane.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this proposed AD were not adopted. The cost impact figure discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the

various levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Airbus Industrie: Docket 2001–NM–72–AD.

Applicability: Model A300 B2; A300 B4; A300 B4–600, B4–600R, and F4–600R (collectively called A300–600); A310; A319; A320; A321; A330; and A340 series airplanes; certificated in any category; equipped with powered cockpit seats manufactured by SOGERMA and having the serial numbers listed in SOGERMA Service Bulletin SB TAAI2–25–402, Revision 1, dated December 21, 2000.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (c) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by

this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent uncommanded horizontal movement of the cockpit seats or loss of ability to lock the seats into place during flight, which could limit the ability of the crew to perform necessary tasks, leading to reduced controllability of the airplane, accomplish the following:

Replacement

(a) Within 6 months after the effective date of this AD: Remove Labinal actuators having part number (P/N) 4136290003 and replace them with Labinal actuators having P/N 4136290004 or 4136290005 or AVIAC actuators having P/N 6147–6, in accordance with SOGERMA Service Bulletin SB TAAI2–25–402, Revision 1, dated December 21, 2000.

Spares

(b) As of the effective date of this AD, no person shall install a powered cockpit seat which has a Labinal actuator having P/N 4136290003 on any airplane.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM–116.

Special Flight Permits

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 2000–524(B), dated December 27, 2000.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 24, 2001.

Donald L. Riggins,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.
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